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ADULT EDUCATION ACTIVITY OF THE CATHOLIC DEVOTIONAL AND CHARITY ASSOCIATIONS IN PÉCS IN THE ERA OF DUALISM

A lot of elements of the adult education history in the era of dualism are still undiscovered; this is especially true for the activities of the churches, with which the research has scarcely dealt with. Beside the Catholic circles – which were established for a common education, beside boosting the Catholic social life – the devotional and charity associations accomplished not too small adult education activities in this period, though it is without doubt that its real flourishing could be done for the next period, for the years between the two world wars. But exactly therefore it is an important and exciting question to examine the roots and beginnings of such activities. (Kiss, 1999; Filla, Gruber, Hinzen and Jug, 1998; Juhász and Simándi, 2008; Gelencsér, w. y.)

In the era of dualism in Pécs the most significant group of the Catholic devotional associations were the Mary-congregations, their aim and task was to raise their members to a higher level of spiritual life and apostolate by practicing a deeper Marian devotion. There was a Mary-congregation in most of the secondary- and higher educational institutions of the town, but congregations were also established for some groups of the adult devotees, mainly for the members of the so-called genteel middle class. Beside these, other devotional associations functioned in the town: the Franciscan third order, the Honour Guard of the Holy Heart of Jesus formed for the honour of the heart of Jesus, the Association of Mary Girls for the poorer girls and many Rosary Associations. Beside these pure prayer meeting associations there were devotional associations created with a special aim, such as the Altar Society, aiding poor churches and spreading the honour of the Eucharism, and the Missionary Club of the Priests of the Pécs diocese, which carried out the organization of folk missions. (Tengely, 2014a.)

There were less Catholic charity associations in Pécs. The first such was the Saint Vince Club established in 1894, the members of which – only men – carried out personal care for the poor. Only twenty years later, in 1914 the somewhat similar organization of Catholic women was created, the Catholic Woman Protecting Association for supporting working women. But a big Catholic charity organization embracing the society of the whole town was only formed at the end of the era, in 1918, called the Pécs organization of the Social Mission Society, but its wide scale adult education activity was only unfolded in the following era. (Tengely, 2008.)

The associations introduced shortly above carried a really significant training activity in our era, in two directions: on the one hand they educated their own members, while on the other hand they carried out the education and teaching of outer persons. This activity was not accidental. The aim of the education of the members was on the one hand to make them more Christian, on the other hand – with getting them know the Catholic ideology as well as the practical training – to prepare them for the different future tasks, and finally, additionally, to widen the general knowledge of the members. The training and educating activity of the associations towards other persons mainly manifested in the work of the charity organizations, connected mainly to the care of the women with lower social situation, but to a lesser extent the devotional associations also took part in it. The aim of such functioning was the physical-spiritual raise of the cared ones by raising their religious feelings, ideological and literacy training (cf. Simándi, 2017).

The first aim of the training of the members: to deepen the personal religious life

The first and foremost basic aim of the training activity of the associations towards their members was to religiously educate the members, that is, to deepen their personal religious lives, generally through a defined religious element, for example by special honouring Virgin Mary in the Mary congregations and the Eucharism in the Altar Society. The primary means of this were the so-called spiritual speeches held by the priest leading the association at the common meetings, beside the private prayers, in these those means were appointed that help to defeat the sins and bad habits as well as to learn the suitable virtues. But the readings from different religious books also served the religious morality education at the association meetings, as well as the sermons held at the usual yearly retreats of the association meetings.

The second aim of the training of the members: the theoretical and practical preparation for future tasks

The second aim of the training of the members was to prepare them for future tasks. This, on the one hand, meant a theoretical training: members of the associations could get to know the Catholic interpretation of the different social, public, legal etc. questions and they could deepen their knowledge about Catholic religion. This mostly manifested in case of the most popular devotional associations of the era, the Mary congregations: these functioned as a kind of elite training, they wanted to educate the leaders of the future Catholic society from the members of the congregations: “illness of today’s era can be cured by the congregations, because they deepen religiosity in

the minds and create noble, clear minds and thus work on a setting up of a better society".¹ It was obvious that the religious and ideological training of the congregation members got an especially large emphasis; they had to better know the Catholic ideology, which they had to advertise later in their lives. The most significant means of this achieving this aim were the apologetic, social, scientific, literary etc. lectures held by the associations for their members, and these were held usually by famous experts, sometimes even the members themselves. The same aim was served by the readings in different religious topics and they were also similar in their formalities, as well as the debate evenings and in the congregation of the Bishopry's Teacher Training Institute even an apologetic section was created. These were usually followed by each other in rather casual periods, except the Mary congregation of the Bishopry's Law Lyceum which had systematic meetings every second week where a lecture, debate or reading was connected to the usual common prayer, since the aim of this congregation was "to nurse and develop the Catholic consciousness, to armour the Catholic lawyers against any attacks towards religion by holding lectures on religious studies and by religious worshipping to train practical Catholics with a living faith from them".² Topics of the lectures organized in the school year 1908-1909 by the Mary congregation of the Law Lyceum: István Késmárky: About the *Ne temere* papal bulla, J. Fájth: About the new syllabus, István Szentkirályi: About the recent attacks of German socialists against the Bible, István Komócsy: Alleged inferiority of Catholicism in the field of culture, István Késmárky: Legal nature of Hungarian church estates, Zs. Kápolnai: Correct principle of morality. The training activity of scientific and public life topics was mainly characteristic for boy and male associations, such kind of activity was at that time the privilege of men, while women's field was at most cultural and social life, this is shown by the systematic Monday afternoon cultural and social lectures and readings held in the Social Missionary Society's Female Club.

Members of some associations could also get to know practical knowledge connected directly to their future work. From these the most important was the so-called Social School of the Social Missionary Society, which worked as a real, organized adult education course in the autumn and winter of 1917 in the building of the Law Lyceum with the leading of Ferenc Faluhelyi, law academy teacher. The school wanted to give way for expert training for those members who felt themselves dedicated to social work and it wanted to educate an enthusiastic female group who would be ready to join then the Missionary Society of Pécs to be formed in the spring of 1918.

1 A pécsi kongregációk közös ünnepélye. In: Pécsi Katolikus Tudósító, 1921. 144-145. p.

2 A Pécsi Püspöki Joglyceum Évkönyve, 1909. 58. p.

The school consisted of two courses. The first was a patron course which gave an official patron qualification after passing the exam. This lasted for three weeks between 9th October and 3rd November, 1917, from 5-8 in the afternoon every day – except Thursdays. The price of the course was 2 crowns. The subjects were the followings, taught by the some of the elite of the intellectual life of Pécs: general ethics (István Sipos teology teacher), general national economics (Ernő Mihályffy university private teacher, retired, ordinary Academy of Law professor), general law (István Késmárky Academy of Law director, university private teacher), legal regulations valid in the crimes of the juveniles (Béla Bök royal tribunal presidential secretary), implementation of corrective education and prison sentence of the juveniles (István Balogh royal tribunal judge), childcare and patronage (Róbert Szieberth, supervising director of state elementary schools in Pécs), basic studies in criminology in particular the factors of child criminality (Ferenc Faluhelyi retired Academy of Law teacher), criminal psychology and criminal pedagogy with the most necessary general psychological elements (János Véték state teacher and patron officer).

The other course provided way for voluntary social workers to further training. This lasted for almost half a year, opposite the former “crash course”. In this case people could not enrol for the whole course, only for the certain subjects and those students who took an exam from the given subjects could get a certificate. These lectures were held between 7th November, 1917 and 25th April, 1918 every Wednesday and Thursday afternoon from 5 to 7, and its price was 2 crowns, similar to the former one. On the volunteers’ course somewhat other, more practical types of subjects were taught: religious education (Gábor Gere teology teacher), social ethics (Missionary sisters), sociology (Ferenc Vasváry university private teacher, retired ordinary Academy of Law teacher), psychology and pedagogy (János Ember royal superintendent), legal knowledge (István Késmárky Academy of Law director, university private teacher), family care (Károlyné dr. Szilassy), mother and baby care (Miklósné dr. Trinn, chairwoman of the a Mother-and Baby care Association of Pécs), youth care (Róbert Szieberth, supervising director of state elementary school of Pécs), public health (Ferenc Ludwig chief medical officer of Pécs), poor-relief (Antal Oberhammer police chief), national economy (Ernő Mihályffy university private teacher, retired ordinary Academy of Law teacher), writing and speaking in the service of social work (József Veigand state teacher), treatment with the protegees (Missionary sisters), technique of the association life (István Komócsy state main real school teacher, director of Emericanum). Beside the theoretical teaching the students took part also in practical training by visiting certain institutions.

Similar “preparing” aim was the entrance of Mary congregation of the Bishopry Teacher Training Institute into the Catholic National League. The

congregation members could thus obtain and study the publications of the National League, with the help of which they could better know the problems and needs of the people they cared for – the teachers did also androgological tasks then (Cf. Pethő, 1998) – and so they could better prepare for their future teaching professions. The Missionary Association of the Priests of the Pécs Diocese also tried to prepare its members to their tasks, that is, to organize and hold folk missions, for the sake of this the founder Ferenc Romaisz, priest of Baranyanádasd wrote and published three books giving help for holding folk missions. (Romaisz, 1899; Romaisz, 1906; Romaisz, w. y.)

The third aim of the training of the members: to enhance general knowledge

The associations tried to develop their members' general knowledge; this is well shown by the fact that in the case of many school congregations the good academic achievement was also a condition for entering, beside the exemplary and moral behaviour. This aim was mainly facilitated by the libraries of the associations, most of them had greater or lesser book collections. One of the first activities of the forming new associations was usually to establish a library containing at least some dozens of books, which was continuously broadened later. So for example, the library of the Teacher Training congregation of the Notre Dame order consisted of 230 volumes, one month after creating the association, these volumes were mainly donated, but new ones were also bought from money donation. The library of the Mary congregation of the Bishopry Teacher Training Institute was of similar size, which had 130 volumes in 1906, four years after its foundation, and one year later 164 volumes. Most probably the biggest files any association had were that of the library of the Franciscan third order: at its founding, in 1908 about 550, while twenty years later it had 1700 books. The Altar Society also had a significant book collection in the priory of the Notre Dame order. The libraries of the associations basically contained religious volumes, but you could find literary fictions and historical books, as well as travelogues. These works, however, were subject to strict consideration: if any of them turned out to have parts against religion or moral, so if it did not fit the spirituality of the associations, it was taken out of the collection of the library. Many different – devotional, social, cultural, youth and public life – Catholic journals also got into the libraries of the associations. The Mary Congregation, the official gazette of the congregations, was sent to every congregational library, the other journals showed the needs of the membership of the associations: for example the congregationists of the Law Lyceum, the young intellectual men could read the scientific and public Church Gazette and the Religio, while the congregation of the Teacher Training read the juvenile and female Catholic journals. (Cf. Tengely, 2014b.)

It also happened that the development of the general knowledge of the members was directly served by these associations: for example in the Female Club of the Social Missionary Association those who were interested could participate on English, German language, reciting and philosophic courses, but unfortunately, we have no detailed information about these.

A lot of associations provided other possibilities for self-training to their members. Almost all congregations had a choir, we even have information that there was a hundred-member choir from the members of the male congregations of Pécs, or at least sometimes it met. The third order suggested straight to its younger members to join the choir of the order, if their voice is good for it. The association often organized theatre performances and afternoon tea programmes, too – usually at the occasion of some holidays or with charitable aim –, where those members who felt like acting could recite poems, sing or play music. But in the congregation of the Outer Civic School of the Notre Dame order had not only occasional possibilities for the members to show their knowledge: here so-called “Self-training sessions” were held especially with self-training nature, where those members who felt literary or artistic talent in themselves could get a half-an-hour performance once a month. The congregation of the Bishopry Teacher Training Institute supported similarly the literary ambitions of its members: for example in 1908, on the occasion of the 50-year jubilee of the appearance of Virgin Mary in Lourdes a literary competition was invited.

The first aim of the training of the people cared: to enhance religiosity

The first and foremost aim of the training activity of the associations towards others – as in the case of the members – was to clear and deepen the faith and moral lives of the cared ones. This meant the Catholic spiritual education of adults, which was appointed as the main aim of Catholic associations even by Pope Leo XIII in his circular letter *Rerum Novarum* starting a big-scale Catholic social work: „... we have mainly to regard the religious-moral perfection and the associations have to be organized mainly on the basis of this (...) the association work has to start from God and has to provide a distinguished importance to religious training so that every member know his duties towards God well, that is what to believe, to hope from eternal life and how to direct his whole life towards it”. (XIII. Leó, 1931. 57-58. p.) The most efficient method of this was the personal spiritual care, that is, the members of the associations tried with confidential talks to educate the people they cared for to live a deepened religious life. This method was the most characteristic for the Saint Vince Club, which stood out exactly with this personal service from the other charitable associations, but similar methods were used by the members of the Social Missionary Association, too.

Another means of the creation of a deepened spiritual life was the holding of sermons, which was mainly connected to the Missionary Association of the Priests of Pécs diocese. This association was created from the members of the clergy specifically for the purpose to organize folk missions for the devotees, that is, spiritual practices about sermons on different topics, lasting for several days. The first mission of the association was held in Regöly between 11th and 18th March, 1900, during which fifteen sermons were held for adults and two for children. The folk mission was really successful, the church was crowded during the whole time and a lot of people went to the sacraments. In the coming years in the diocese similar missions were held in many places, everywhere achieving nice results.

A somewhat similar method was used for the sake of this aim by the Female Circle of the Catholic Woman Protecting Association, too, where a short sermon was held every Sunday afternoon for the maidservants, working women and apprentice girls before the different entertaining programmes.

The second aim of the training of the people cared: to spread the Catholic ideology

The other aim of the adult education activity of the associations towards the society was to spread and strengthen the Catholic ideology, as well as, in conjunction with this, to repel the opposite, mainly sociodemocratic trends. The call for this task was also included in the *Rerum Novarum*: „The members [see. the people cared] must be strengthened with special care against the different dangers of (...) fashionable fallacies” – Pope Leo XIII wrote. (XIII. Leó, 1931. 58. p.) In our country this was connected with the so-called Catholic renaissance unfolding in these years, after the 1894-95 church policy fights, when the need to propagate Catholicism emerged with elemental force from the Catholic society. The primary means of this was the support of the Catholic press and the spreading and popularization of such journals. In this activity both the charity and the devotional associations largely took part: almost all congregation had a press section, and the charity associations did not miss to provide their cared ones with Catholic press products, either, the regulations of some male congregations obliged their members to demand for Catholic journals at public places – restaurants, train stations – thus getting more and more members of society to know their ideology. Members of the female congregations could naturally not do it; they found other ways to teach the ideology for the adults: Catholic journals that were already read were collected and given to patients of hospitals, and they also collected subscribers for different Catholic journals. (Cf. Klestenitz, 2008.)

The third aim of the training of the people cared: to enhance general knowledge

The third training activity aim of the associations towards others was to enhance the knowledge of the people cared. But this meant something else as in the case of the members: while there the usually educated members of the associations got a broadened literary, scientific etc. knowledge, in case of the cared people it was mainly a kind of enlightening connected to certain practical things – such as childcare, common diseases, alcoholism – through which the aim was to improve the financial and social situation of the poorer social classes and to enhance their standard of living. This was mainly connected to the work of the charity associations and within them the Catholic Woman Protecting Association. The Woman Protecting Association regularly held enlightening lectures in the sections of poor girls and women, in the Catholic Mothers' Association and in the Female Circle. These included different practical topics – for example raising children –, connected to certain entertaining activities – games, listening to music etc. – which were many times supplemented by projection for the sake of better understanding and definitely for getting more attention. But for the request of the Woman Protecting Association mothers were visited by nurses in their homes, and they gave advice on how to care children. The devotional associations slightly also took their part from this field of adult education, through their libraries mentioned above: they could be used by persons not belonging to their membership, and this was preferentially done according to the sources.

Conclusion

On the basis of the above we can claim that the Catholic devotional and charity associations carried out not at all negligible adult education and public education activity in the era of dualism, which has been neglected by researches so far. But the example of Pécs refers to the fact that the nation-wide research of the topic would enrich our knowledge about the history of the Hungarian adult education with a lot of valuable novelties.

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